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TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson No. 4

BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

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Lesson Four

MORE ABOUT THE LIFE POWER

Now that you have colored the first Tarot Key, you are in a better position to understand the details of the symbolism of which only the main outlines were given in the preceding lesson.

The white sun behind the Fool is placed in the upper right-hand corner of the design. Look at Keys 10 and 21, and you will see that in those pictures this place in the design is occupied by the head of an eagle, symbol of the zodiacal sign Scorpio.

Astrologers take this sign as governor of the reproductive functions of the human body. Hence the sun indicates the idea that the ONE FORCE typified by the Fool is actually related to the reproductive power of living organisms. On its practical side, our work has much to do with control and adaptation of the force ordinarily expressed in reproduction.

The color of the sun is a reference to the Primal Will. On an ancient occult diagram called the "Tree of Life", the first manifestation of the Life-power, corresponding to the statement numbered 1, in The Pattern on the Trestleboard, is named the CROWN, and is represented by a white circle. From this white circle proceeds a descending path which corresponds to the letter Aleph and to the Fool.

Here is an intimation that the cultural power represented by Aleph and by this Key is identical with the Primal Will. It proceeds from that Will when a cycle of manifestation begins.

Furthermore, since the position of the sun has been shown to make that luminary a symbol of reproduction, the idea behind this is that manifestation is actually a reproduction of the power of the Primal Will. In the Hermetic Wisdom taught by Tarot, a fundamental principle is that the manifested universe is not something made by the Life-power out of some kind of material other than itself. Rather is the manifestation to be considered as being the projection of the Life-power into the relative conditions of time and space as we know them.

The universe is the same essential nature as the Life-power. It is the expression of an idea in the Universal Mind. This idea is what is meant by the creative WORD, or Logos. Hence even the exoteric Christian creed speaks of the Logos as being "begotten, not made."

The green wreath encircling the Fool's hair symbolizes the fact that the green leaves of plants do actually bind sunlight, just as the wreath binds the Fool's yellow hair. Capturing sunbeams, and binding them into organic form, is the principal work of the chlorophyll which

is the green coloring matter of plants. This is what makes green vegetables so valuable for food. They constitute one of the most important forms in which the Life-power puts itself at your disposal. See that you eat enough of them.

The feather rising from the wreath is a wing-feather of an eagle. It represents animal life, a step higher in the scale of organism than the vegetable kingdom. It is red, the color of desire and action. The only true aspiration is the desire to **be** something. The desire to express some particular form of the Life-power is **action.** What do **you** desire to be and do?

The wand over the Fool's shoulder, like a yardstick, suggests the idea of the forces indicated by what the Life-power has already accomplished.

We cannot measure the Life-power itself, or plumb the depths of that limitless ocean of possibilities. Our measurements must be of things already accomplished. Hence the Fool brings his wand with him from the lower levels whence he has ascended to the height shown in this picture.

A wand, moreover, is associated with magic, and we shall see later on that magic begins with the analysis or evaluation of conditions which are now present before us because they are results of past activity. All successful calculation of the probable future outcome of present action requires accurate estimation of the nature of the powers revealed by what has preceded the present moment.

The most important thing to measure is our own place in the cosmic order. According to the Bible, the full measure of man is this: "Thou hast made him but little lower than the angels, and crownest him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Psalm 8.)

We do not quote this in order to support our doctrine by Biblical authority. Rather is it our purpose to show that the Bible, in its poetical description of the true measure of man, announces a truth which is abundantly demonstrated by the success attending science and invention, founded on methods which are basically neither more nor less than accurate measurement.

Hitherto, the emphasis in science has been on the measurement of things and forces in man's environment. In occultism, the greater emphasis is laid on the correct estimation and use of powers within man himself.

These powers are partly physical and partly superphysical. For occult science is aware of realities beyond the limits of physical force and form, yet applies to the analysis of such realities methods of careful observation and measurement not less rigorous than those which have been so fruitful when applied to the study of man's physical environment.

The wand is black because it represents occult powers. Whenever we take our own measure truly, a secret force in human personality is made manifest. Our knowledge of this helps us to arrive at correct measurement of our environment. Our estimates would be inaccurate did we not take the hidden force into account.

The wallet suspended from the wand is a symbol of the powers of subconsciousness which depend from, or upon, the self-conscious power of analysis. The basic power of subconsciousness is memory, and memory is essentially reproductive. Hence the wallet is emblazoned with the device of a flying eagle, which refers (1) to aspiration, as having its roots in subconscious desire; and (2) to the reproductive forces, associated with the eagle as one of the emblems of the sign Scorpio.

The eagle is also the bird of Zeus, or Jupiter. King of birds, it suggests dominance over the element of air which is attributed by Qabalists to the letter Aleph.

On the flap of the wallet is an open eye. It is the All-seeing Eye of Freemasonry, the Egyptian Eye of Horus, the Eye placed in a delta or triangle on the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States.

The particular aspect of Horus which tradition associates with the Eye is **Hoor-pa-Kraat,** Harpocrates, the god of silence, pictured in Egyptian hieroglyphs as a child seated on a lotus holding his forefinger to his lips. He is the "younger" Horus, god of the morning sun, which shines above the traveler pictured in this Tarot Key. In Egyptian mythology, the younger Horus has seven aspects or forms. Keep this in mind, for in subsequent lessons you will learn that the Life-power has seven principal phases of manifestation through human personality.

The Eye of Horus is placed on the flap of the wallet in the position usually occupied by a lock. It means: **Sight is what unlocks both conscious and subconscious powers.** The way we look at ourselves and at life is what determines whether we are puppets of subconsciousness, or masters of its hidden powers.

Ten dots, representing stitches, are on the flap of the wallet. They symbolize the ten aspects of the Life-power, and therefore correspond to the statements numbered from 1 to 10 in The Pattern on the Trestleboard. The meaning is similar to what is meant by the ten solar wheels on the Fool's coat.

The rose represents desire. Its thorns symbolize pain. Its bloom typifies beauty and joy. It is white, like the sun, to intimate that through right cultivation of the desire nature we may bring it into unison with the Primal Will. Then our desires will be conscious expressions of actual underlying tendencies in the cosmic order. To control the desire nature, to cultivate it aright, to use it so that we may enjoy the beauty it can bring us without suffering the pains resulting from misuse—this is one of the great practical secrets. The rose, therefore, is pictured as

being a cultivated flower, and the youth carries it gaily without pricking his fingers on its thorns.

The eight-pointed star on the Fool's shoulder is a symbol of the sun and the crescent near it represents the moon. Sun and moon have many profound meanings in occult science, and all these meanings are developments of the doctrine that all things are manifestations of action and reaction between the solar, or electric, and the lunar or magnetic, currents of the Great Magical Agent, L. V. X.

The yellow circle enclosing a triple flame, shown on the Fool's breast, represents the doctrine that the One Force is essentially that which is manifest to us as light and fire. This particular symbol refers to the formless state of the One Force prior to the beginning of a cycle of creation.

The ten wheels were touched on in the preceding lesson. In Hermetic Wisdom a wheel with eight spokes is a symbol for pure Spirit. Alchemists employ the same symbol to represent their Quintessence, or Fifth Essence. It is also akin to what Hindu philosophy calls Akasha.

Every one of these ten wheels is surrounded by seven trefoils, representing seven basic modes of activity which we shall hereafter learn to associate with the seven alchemical metals, and with the seven interior stars of occult astrology. The "stars" or "metals" are the same as the seven chakras of Yoga philosophy.

The trefoils are green, a color associated with the idea of immortality, to show that they typify eternal phases of the Life-powers activity.

One of the ten wheels contains a Hebrew letter Shin (ש). This is the letter printed on the twentieth Key of Tarot. It is a Qabalistic symbol of the fiery Life-breath which is the spiritual energy that brings all things into manifestation.

The abyss yawning at the Fool's feet is in contrast to the height whereon he stands. It symbolizes "that which is below." It is nature, the relative, the phenomenon or effect, in contrast to Spirit, the Absolute, the noumenon or cause. At the bottom of the abyss is a valley, the scene of labor, of activity, of struggle and competition, in contrast to the ideas of superiority and supremacy suggested by the Fool's position on the mountain-peak.

The valley is what the Chinese philosopher, Lao-Tze, calls the Mother-Deep, what Hindus term Prakriti, the mysterious power of the Supreme Spirit. Because the valley is the field of experience, it corresponds also to ideas which Hebrew sages relate to the noun Chokmah, Wisdom. On the Tree of Life before-mentioned, the path of the letter Aleph terminates at the point on the diagram to which Chokmah is attributed.

In practical psychology, the abyss represents what we call subconsciousness. The natural metaphor for this plane of consciousness is "depths". Thus, in an article by Dr. Putnam on the work of Freud, we read: "In the course of these investigations Freud and Jung and their followers have dived more deeply than anyone before into the mysteries of the unconscious life."

The traveler is on the verge of descending. Thus the picture shows the Supreme Spirit, or superconscious aspect of the Life-power, as we think of it prior to the beginning of a cycle of self-expression. The wayfarer is unafraid because he knows he cannot be injured by his descent into the depths. Furthermore, he is aware that he will certainly raise himself to the greater height toward which he directs his eager gaze.

This picture represents the limitless force which is the central reality of every human life. It stands for what you really speak of when you say, "I AM". It is an image of the **Something** in you which sees far beyond the seeming limitations of your present circumstances.

That Something has brought you this far on your journey toward supreme attainment. That Something is what makes you want to succeed, what makes you want to enjoy better health, what makes you want better circumstances.

Because it knows itself perfectly, knows how limitless are its possibilities, how irresistible its powers, how boundless its opportunities, that **Something** in you will not let you alone. Though you may seem to be at the end of your resources, it urges you to press on. Though you may be past what men call middle life, it knows itself to be forever young, and knocks importunately at the inner door of your mind, trying to let you know that in the very core of your being is a power which knows nothing of age or defeat or ill-health—a power which over and over again has worked miracles of healing and rejuvenation, has transformed disaster into victory, lack into abundance, sorrow into joy.

In short, the picture of the Fool is a symbol of the limitless power of your own inner, spiritual, superconscious life. In order to get more and more of that power into expression every day from now on, you must begin by thoroughly impressing your subconsciousness with this image of that One Force.

The method is simplicity itself. Just **look** at this picture five minutes every morning during the week and five minutes every evening. Remember, **SIGHT** is the power which locks and unlocks the wallet of subconscious forces. Look at the details of the design, one after another. This exercise will transfer the picture from the printed Key to the cells of your brain. Then the Key will become an integral element of your flesh and blood. You will begin to **feel** its Reality.

Of all existences I am the source,
The continuation, and the end.
I am the germ,
I am the growth,
I am the decay.
All things and creatures I send forth;
I support them while yet they stand without;
And when the dream of separation ends,
I cause their return unto myself.

I am the Life,
And the Wheel of the Law,
And the Way that leadeth to the Beyond
There is none else.

From THE BOOK OF TOKENS
By Dr. Paul Foster Case